



U.S. SENATOR • ARIZONA

JOHN MCCAIN

www.senate.gov/~mccain

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DECEMBER 2, 1997

CONTACT:

NANCY IVES
202-224-7130

PRESS RELEASE

McCAIN SUPPORTIVE OF DIRECTION OF NATIONAL DEFENSE PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator John McCain, a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, issued the following statement in response to the National Defense Panel's (NDP) recommendations:

"I commend the NDP for the direction of their recommendations in assessing our national military strategy and for their hard work in reviewing the critical issues, challenges, and threats that may emerge over the next ten to twenty years. Their insights on how the U. S. might adapt to meet its future security needs, along with the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) released last year and the recently released Defense Reform Initiative, will contribute to the ongoing debate about our future national military strategy.

"I look forward to exploring in greater detail the Panel's recommendations and the views of individual Panel members during hearings before the House and Senate defense committees next year.

"The NDP was established by the Congress to ensure that alternative viewpoints are available as the Pentagon focuses on the future of our military in the next century. The Panel correctly points out that the weapons we research, develop, and procure today will be the same weapons that we will ask our young men and women to go into battle with, if necessary, in 2010 or 2020. Planning for the transformation from today's military to a future force, ready to meet the threats of the next century, is already overdue.

"I was disappointed that the NDP did not make specific programmatic recommendations on some controversial modernization programs, such as the tactical fighter aircraft of the future. However, I do support the criteria developed by the Panel, called a 'decision template' for assessing future weapon systems, which should provide needed guidance to the Pentagon in making procurement decisions.

"The NDP is absolutely correct in criticizing Congress for not approving additional base closures. The defense budget is already inadequate to support military modernization as well as excess infrastructure. The NDP estimates that an additional \$5 to \$10 billion per year is needed to transform our current forces into capable and ready forces to meet future conflicts. Trimming base infrastructure, reducing the operational tempo associated with non-warfighting activities, streamlining our acquisition process, consolidating and relocating support functions, reducing force structure, and canceling unnecessary programs will be necessary to make funds available for future modernization.

"We must realize this is one more step down a path to changing the way the Pentagon does business and it's absolutely essential if we are to provide the necessary resources to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The Panel has produced a thoughtful report that must be considered in the ongoing debate about our future military strategy."

###